communication may take place over "...an outside communications link such as a modem for communication with a regional or national network. In this manner, *editing, accounting and monitoring of systems performance can be done* locally at the store site, or remotely from a regional or national center where promotionals are solicited and display graphics are created." Col. 3, lines 37-43 (emphasis added). Following the check-out procedure, the coupon file in the communication unit (14) is cleared. Col. 5, lines 1-5. In an alternative embodiment, the communication unit (14) is provided a transceiver so that it may receive data and be loaded with coupon information remotely. See col. 5, lines 40-44.

Fajkowski discloses a system and apparatus that electronically reads and stores bar codes from paper coupons (and elsewhere) and electronically presents the bar codes for redemption. Col. 1, lines 9-14. A portable coupon card, for use by a user, includes a bar code scanner, a memory, a display, a communications port, a microprocessor, and operational keys. Col. 3, lines 55-60. The user is able to scan paper bar codes into the coupon card for storage and organization. Col. 4, lines 7-11. A retail store is outfitted with a periphery device alongside its cash register to accept the coupon card, read the coupon bar codes, receive data from the cash register indicating which products were purchased, and determine which coupons are redeemable. Col. 4, lines 15-33. A retail local server may be networked into a plurality of periphery devices to compile information concerning which coupons have been redeemed and to create detailed reports for store managers. The server may also transfer information relating to future coupons or changes to the periphery devices for subsequent loading onto the user's portable coupon card. Col. 4, line 65 - col. 5, line 14. A clearinghouse receives information on redeemed coupons from the retailer's server and generates reports for the manufacturer regarding amounts to be paid the retail store for the redeemed coupons. The clearing house may also provide coupon information and changes to the server for eventual loading onto a user's portable coupon card. Col. 5, lines 14-65. In addition to the periphery device, coupon information may be presented to a user's portable coupon card by: a) paper bar codes, b) distribution to conventional computers via the Internet (and subsequent magnetic writing to the coupon card), c) telephone lines, and d) radio frequency transmission to a receiver, for example a digital pager. Col. 6, lines 1-65.

Fajkowski includes a fraud prevention technique to reduce intentional *retailer* misredemption to increase retailer profits. The retailer is required to provide appropriate invoices to support coupon submissions. If the retailer does not, the retailer is placed on a suspend list by the manufacturer. Col. 3, lines 16-34 (emphasis added). Redeemed coupon data collected by the local server from the periphery devices are used to create redemption reports for the retailer (to detect fraud at a particular periphery device) but such data are securely stored so that the retailer cannot access or alter the data. Col. 22, lines 15-27. The server communicates redeemed coupon data to the clearinghouse, where it is compiled into a report of the total amount of redemptions per store and a report of the amounts owed by the manufacturer. Col. 23, lines 6-32. The clearinghouse may also transmit future coupons to the server. Col. 23, lines 54-64.

Claim 1 requires that the coupon service provider be coupled to a public wide area network and service a plurality of valid merchants. Begum, at column 5, lines 31-39, states that the systems controller (50) of the store communicates with the coupon

redemption center by radio or telephone. Begum does not distinguish between valid and invalid merchants. However, Fajkowski teaches that a retailer may be placed on a suspend list. If the combination of Begum and Fajkowski is proper, the first element alone is likely obvious in view of the combination. Other elements of claim 1 are not obvious.

Claim 1 requires that a public wireless network be coupled to the public wide area network. While Begum discloses the use of radio/microwave at column 5, lines 31-39, Begum does not teach that the radio/microwave is coupled to the public wide area network. In fact, by presenting telephone as a distinct alternative to radio/microwave, Begum clearly demonstrates that a public wireless network is not connected to a public wide area network. Moreover, the radio/microwave taught by Begum is not disclosed to be a public wireless network, rather, it is expected that such a radio/microwave would be a private link. Fajkowski suggests that a coupon may be delivered by way of a digital pager, but this suggestion does not include a public wireless network coupled to the public wide area network.

Examiner has indicated that Begum discloses that promotions are transmitted through a modem for communication *with* a regional or national network. Examiner essentially equates Begum's regional or national network with a public wide area network, such as the Internet. It is an important distinction that Begum does not suggest this regional or national network is a communications network (note that the communication is "with" not "over" or "through" or "via"), rather, as emphasized above, Begum discloses the regional or national network is a remote center for "...editing, accounting, and monitoring of systems performance...where promotionals are solicited and display graphics are created." Col. 3, lines 39-43. Thus, Applicants believe the equation of Begum's regional or national network with a public wide area network like the Internet, to be unsupported by the disclosure of Begum.

Claim 1 requires that the electronic coupon be delivered by the coupon service provider via the public wide area network *and* said public wireless network. Neither Begum nor Fajkowski alone or together disclose this required delivery path.

Claim 1 requires that evidence of the first merchant being valid is conveyed to the coupon service provider and approval to redeem the tendered coupon is conveyed from the coupon service provider to the redemption device, both conveyances via the public wide area network. Begum's systems controller *periodically* communicates with a coupon redemption center computer for coupon crediting and accounting. Col. 5, lines 19-39. Fajkowski's server *compiles* information concerning which coupons have been redeemed and sends the information to a clearinghouse to enable payment by the manufacturer. With regard to Fajkowski's fraud prevention technique, the retailer is required to provide appropriate invoices to support coupon submissions. If the retailer does not, the retailer is placed on a suspend list by the manufacturer. Col. 4, line 65 - col. 5, line 65. In both Begum and Fajkowski, the coupon information is compiled and sent for later crediting and fraud detection. The requirement of claim 1 is that the particular coupon being presented for redemption, rather than a compilation of many coupons, is conveyed to the redemption device. And it is to the particular coupon that the redemption device provides approval. Neither Begum nor Fajkowski, alone or

together, teach or suggest the approval of the transaction on the required individual coupon basis.

Examiner has pointed out that Begum suggests the store redeems coupons issued by others as well as its own coupons. Col. 5, lines 35-39. Applicants appreciate this correction of Applicants' understanding.

Claims 2 and 3 are dependent upon claim 1, which Applicants believe to be allowable. Applicants have cancelled claims 4 and 5, thereby rendering Examiner's rejection of these claims moot.

In summary, significant limitations of claim 1, described above, have not been taught or suggested by Begum or Fajkowski, taken alone or in combination. Accordingly, in view of the foregoing amendment and discussion, Applicants believe that Examiner's rejections have been overcome. Examiner is respectfully urged to withdraw the rejections and pass the present Application, as amended, to allowance. In the alternative, Examiner is respectfully urged to enter the foregoing amendment as placing the present application in a condition better suited for appeal.

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